

OLYMPIC COAST  
NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY  
Meeting Minutes

OCNMS Advisory Council Meeting  
May 16, 2014

Makah Marina  
Neah Bay, WA

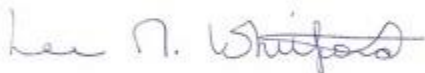
Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary  
NOAA, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries  
115 E. Railroad Avenue, Suite 301  
Port Angeles, WA 98362-2925

Reviewed by OCNMS Superintendent:



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Approved by AC Chair:



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Lee Whitford, Chair

**Advisory Council (AC) Members/Alternates in Attendance:** Brady Scott (WDNR), Heather Reed (WDFW), Linda Rotmark (Tourism/ Economic Development), Rich Osborne (MRC), Rebecca Post (WDOE), Steve Joner (Makah Tribe), Richard Carroll (Commercial Fishing), John Veentjer (Marine Industry), Bob Boekelheide (Citizen-at-Large), Eric Delvin (Conservation), Katie Krueger (Quileute Tribe), Carolyn Winters (US Navy), Jan Newton (Research), John Stadler (NMFS), Katrina Lassiter (WDNR), Lee Whitford (Education), Jennifer Hennessey (WDOE)

**Presenters and Members of the Public in Attendance:** John Mosher (US Navy), Shaari Unger (US Navy), Greg Williams (NWFSC), Russell Svec (Makah Tribe), Stevie Hamilton (Makah Tribe), Patsy Bain (Makah Tribal Council), Camiel Dhooge, Phillip Renault (Neah Bay High School science teacher) and 14 science students from Neah Bay High School

**NOAA/OCNMS Staff in Attendance:** Carol Bernthal, George Galasso, Kevin Grant and Karlyn Langjahr (OCNMS)

Chair Brady Scott called meeting to order and reviewed the goals and purpose of the Advisory Council per its Charter. Stevie Hamilton of Makah Tribe began with a welcoming prayer chant used for healing and clarity for today's meeting and its goals. Russ Svec of Makah Fisheries welcomed all council members on behalf of the Makah Tribal Council Chairman and Vice Chairman, who were unable to attend. He emphasized one of OCNMS's goals of building on strength of partnership with the four coastal treaty tribes, and the upholding of Treaty Rights.

**Adopt Agenda** – The draft agenda was adopted without changes. ***Rebecca Post motioned to approve the meeting agenda and Lee Whitford seconded with full AC member consensus.***

#### **Internal Affairs:**

**Approval of March 2014 Meeting Minutes** – Rich Osborne pointed out a minor error on page 3 in the first paragraph. ***Rebecca Post motioned to approve the meeting agenda and Eric Delvin seconded. There was full AC member consensus to approve March meeting minutes after incorporating these changes.***

**AC Executive Committee Officers** – Brady Scott announced his resignation from the AC effective immediately after this meeting as he has accepted a job with the Port of Bellingham and will no longer sit on the council. He reminded the council that Vice Chair Ellen Matheny had recently departed and that her alternate, Lee Whitford, was appointed to Education primary by Superintendent Carol per the AC Charter. Lee was nominated for the Executive officer position of Chair, to replace Brady; Heather Reed was nominated to move from Secretary to Vice-Chair, replacing Ellen; and George Hart was nominated for the position of Secretary. Brady opened the floor for discussion or nomination of Executive Committee candidates.

***Rich Osborne motioned to approve nominees Lee, Heather and George to the respective officer positions they were nominated for on the Executive Committee; Jan Newton seconded. There was full AC member consensus.*** Lee Whitford was elected as Chair, Heather Reed as Vice-Chair and George Hart as Secretary, to be seated immediately following this meeting. Carol recognized Brady's six years of service on the Advisory Council, with 4.5 years serving on the Executive Committee.

**Recruitment of Education Alternate and Marine Resources Committee Alternate Seats** – Carol Bernthal shared that the Federal Register Notice was published May 15 announcing openings for the Education alternate and Marine Resources Committee alternate positions on the Advisory Council. The positions will help fill two recent vacancies on the council. The application deadline is June 30, so the selected candidates will probably not be seated on the AC until the September meeting.

**Science Working Group** – Lee Whitford, Co-Chair of the Science Working Group (SWG), updated the council on the SWG's progress. According to the SWG Charter members were to 1) collect information for the next OCNMS Condition Report, and 2) review and update the Science Needs document. The SWG has been working on those two tasks and OCNMS staff lead, Liam Antrim, is starting the draft report that will be presented to the council at the July AC meeting.

#### **Information Items:**

**Tourism Working Group** – Tourism Working Group (TWG) member Linda Rotmark presented their final report and recommendation letter to the council. The purpose of the TWG was to identify opportunities for OCNMS to serve visitors to the Olympic Peninsula and to support the tourism industry's awareness of and protection of sanctuary resources. Two products served as the framework of the TWG: 1) Visitor Services Action Plan from OCNMS Management Plan and 2) ONMS's *Campaign of Engagement*. After compiling results from a survey given to different tourism experts and stakeholders throughout the Olympic Peninsula, TWG members ranked all proposed strategies and ideas by set criteria. All ideas (22) were valuable and worth pursuing; however given sanctuary resources (financial, staff) and legal limitations, the members highlighted six priority action items. The top tier recommendations related to supporting stewardship tourism (voluntourism) and supporting tourism businesses. After discussion from council members, ***Rebecca Post motioned to approve the TWG final report and recommendation letter with Lee Whitford seconding the motion and full AC member consensus.***

Carol followed up with an announcement from ONMS calling for Mini-Grant proposals (\$600-\$1,500) to implement selected priorities within ONMS Travel and Tourism Strategy, two of which align well with TWG recommendations:

1. Improve website which highlights available recreational activities
2. Develop and/or promote voluntourism and citizen science opportunities

Carol would like to submit an application for OCNMS and shared an initial idea to promote and market the September coastal clean-up in conjunction with the International Coastal Clean-up. Last year was the first time WA joined the September efforts, but attendance was low. OCNMS could invite a travel writer/journalist to write a feature article (for Alaska Air or similar) to boost recruitment and to draw in new group of volunteers for this event. The Advisory Council indicated support for the concept.

**U.S. Navy's Northwest Training and Testing Environmental Impact Statement Status** – John Mosher of U.S. Navy (USN) began by giving an overview of the Northwest Training and Testing (NWTT) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). USN recently released the draft EIS at the end of January with public comment period closing in April. The goals of the NWTT EIS are to support Navy at-sea training and testing requirements in the NW for 2015-2020; consolidate and reassess environmental impacts of three previous EISs, support reauthorization under Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act and comply with other regulations. Three EIS alternatives were presented, of which the preferred option is a “no action alternative”. John described the overall EIS Study Area, which includes an inland waters area, an offshore area and SEAFAC area. Part of the sanctuary waters overlap with the Study Area and activities in OCNMS were listed.

USN has been working on passive acoustic monitoring, with two HARPes deployed off Cape Elizabeth in OCNMS and near Quinault Canyon just outside of OCNMS. Species commonly detected include the blue whale, fin whale, gray whale, humpback whale, sperm whale, orcas, Risso's dolphin and Pacific white-sided dolphin. A group of 11 gray whales in the Pacific Coast Feeding Group were satellite tagged to track overall movements and patterns within the region, with results confirming their preference for shallow, nearshore habitat. Another satellite tagging project involved 3 species of baleen whales and off-shore orcas. USN has begun satellite tagging blue and fin whales along the U.S. West Coast to compare individual movement patterns and determine residence time. A new project with US Navy funding to Northwest Fisheries Science Center will model the distribution of southern resident orcas using passive acoustic data and satellite tag tracking. USN is in process of conducting meetings and consultations to revise their analysis and address public comments; the Final NWTT EIS is expected to be released in July 2015 with Record of Decision in October 2015. Navy monitoring

and associated technical reports for Pacific-wide and Northwest efforts can be found at:  
[www.navy Marinespeciesmonitoring.us/reading-room/pacific](http://www.navy Marinespeciesmonitoring.us/reading-room/pacific)

## **Lunch Break**

### **Ecological Indicators and California Current IEA: Avenues of Growing Collaboration Between**

**NOAA's Science Centers and OCNMS** – Greg Williams of NOAA's Northwest Fisheries Science Center in Seattle, and member of the Science Working Group, presented on his work with the California Current Integrate Ecosystem Assessment (IEA). The IEA provides a synthesis and integration of information on physical, chemical, ecological and human processes in relation to specific management objectives. IEAs are process- and product-oriented, with increasing interdisciplinary collaboration and relevance. For example, a socio-ecological system of California Current ecosystem would include focal ecosystem components, mediating components and drivers and pressures. Natural systems (e.g. ecological integrity, habitat) and social systems (e.g. human well-being, laws/policies) influence and are influenced by human activities. Conceptual models and scoping efforts help frame the issues, followed by field data providing status and trends leading to management questions, such as "Is the ecosystem healthy?" A risk assessment then quantifies and ranks threats, resulting in scenarios to generate estimates of alternative and future trade-offs. From there, IEA products are determined or developed. Key partners include Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC), NOAA managers, WDNR/WDOE, and ONMS.

Greg presented their findings on the state of the California Current (CC) Ecosystem from 2013, including: climate and ocean drivers, ecological integrity, human activities and human well-being. Ecosystem indicators were used to obtain the status or trend in ecosystem attributes. For example, human activities indicators could include fishery removals, nutrient and sediment inputs, invasive species, etc. Temperature and upwelling indicators were found to be generally stable and close to the long-term average, but pointed toward a cooler, more productive system. Dissolved oxygen levels were generally stable and mostly above the hypoxia threshold, but were recorded as localized processes and might not capture nearshore hypoxic events. Measurements of zooplankton biomass suggested that in most recent years there has been a generally productive level, but sardine and anchovy abundance has been reduced. Chinook salmon escapements have been average, with some increasing and some decreasing trends and El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) likely to have a negative impact on their stocks. California sea lion pups continued on a long-term increasing trend; however, results showed underweight pups in 2012 and an unusually high mortality event in early 2013. The groundfish mean trophic level (MTL) may indicate less predation by groundfish on forage species. Human activities indicators included spatial analyses, developed with a time series data for different pressures:

commercial shipping has declined; nutrient inputs were elevated with recently declining trends; offshore oil and gas activity has leveled off after a decline. Fisheries landing 5-year trends were stable for most species, and increasing for shrimp and coastal pelagic species. None were found showing a decreasing trend. Human well-being indicators are still being built and improved. Fishing fleet diversity is used to measure revenue stability, and has generally been declining over time on the West Coast.

Next steps for the CCIEA team include: completing gaps in habitat component and seabirds, progressing and expanding on human dimension and human well-being indicators, continuing risk assessments, expanding management scenarios and integrating the information. One of the primary objectives now is to use coast-wide IEA for regional application, such as identification of key ecological indicators for OCNMS (which tend to be habitat-based). The IEA framework provides an existing system for evaluating and selecting these indicators, and might be able to contribute with locally relevant data at a sanctuary scale. Collaboration with OCNMS and partners could help to identify focal indicators of ecosystem status and trends for the next Condition Report and generate status and trend data for selected indicators, such as groundfish. Oceanographers on their team could assist with ocean buoy data, validation tools for regional climate models and development of habitat quality forecasts for upper tropic levels (climate and ocean drivers), with a goal of forecasting CC ocean conditions up to 6-9 months. Sanctuary and community input will help develop social indicators, other data sources or relevant time series and the development of specific management issues, such as shipping.

**Improving Survivability of Released Rockfish in West Coast Recreational Fisheries** – Heather Reed, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), manages recreational fisheries for the coastal areas and recreational halibut fishery on the coast and in Puget Sound. She is also one of her agency's representatives on an advisory body for groundfish management, including rockfish. Rockfish are long-lived, slow-growing and late maturing fish, which make them susceptible to over-fishing. Once declared overfished, they are then managed under a rebuilding plan with limitations on recreational fishing. Yelloweye and canary rockfish are considered overfished in Washington, with Bocaccio rockfish listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in Puget Sound. Prohibiting retention is the primary tool along the U.S. West Coast to help rebuild these fish stocks, therefore only a small amount of mortality in recreational fishing is allowed. For example, WA's recreational yelloweye harvest limit in 2013 and 2014 equates to approximately 1,000 fish (2.9 metric tons). Rockfish are deep dwelling fish with swim bladders that regulate their position in the water column; however, if rockfish are brought to the surface too quickly, the gases in their swim bladder cause eyes to bulge and can even force the stomach to expand out of their mouth, resulting in fish that float on the surface (a physiological condition called "barotrauma"). Research has found that releasing rockfish back to at least 60 feet deep (or to the depth at which the fish was caught),

increases survivability of rockfishes compared to releasing fish at the surface. There are several types of descending devices that can be used to help release rockfishes at depth; many of them consist of an inverted hook with a weight, which can be attached to the fishing rod or line. Studies show that releasing fishes with these devices attached allow recompression of swim bladder gases that had expanded. The fish can then recover from barotrauma and survive, even if it shows severe signs of barotrauma. Key to a more successful rate of rockfish survivability include: finding the decompression device that works best for the individual fisher, releasing the fish within 2 minutes of reaching the surface, limiting the handling of the fish and avoiding venting. Researchers are also finding that some species of rockfish are more resilient and can recover better from barotrauma than others, such as the yelloweye rockfish. One limitation of the studies is that long-term effects and survivability are still unknown. For example, there is uncertainty as to how the barotrauma stress will potentially impact the rockfishes' reproductive success.

WDFW conducts outreach and education, producing informational brochures and posters, updating WDFW webpages, and working directly with stakeholders to give demonstrations on the descending devices. Recreational fisheries are very important to coastal communities such as Neah Bay and La Push, therefore it was very challenging when WDFW had to issue an emergency closure of recreational bottom fisheries for the first time. Heather worked with Puget Sound Anglers to meet directly with more recreational fishers from different coastal communities prior to the recreational halibut season opening in Westport, Ilwaco, Neah Bay and La Push. She presented the results of mortality rates, showing that mortality rate decreases significantly beyond 30-50 fathoms for canary rockfishes. Yelloweye rockfishes respond better to deeper releases, with mortality rate decreasing after 50-100 fathom depths. At this point WDFW is not mandating that recreational fishers utilize decompression devices, and are finding the voluntary information from fishers very helpful to understanding overall survivability. To see a video of rockfish released with decompression device, go to <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/bottomfish/rockfish/mortality.html>.

**Management of Species of Concern in Makah Fisheries** – Steve Joner presented on behalf of Joe Petersen of Makah Tribe, beginning with an introduction of the Groundfish Scorecard, listing the overfished species on the West Coast (including Bocaccio, Canary, Cow cod, Dark blotch, Petrale, Pacific Ocean Perch, and Yelloweye). The most important species from this list group for the Makah fisheries are the Canary, Dark blotch, Petrale and Yelloweye, with Petrale and Widow Rockfish having recently been rebuilt. As scientists have learned more about these species, the estimated time to rebuild species has decreased significantly. Rougheye and China rockfish species are current challenges to the Pacific Council process. Steve gave a historical background of fisheries and groundfish management in the area. Once the Pacific Fishery

Management Council (PFMC) determined that there are overfished species, they developed rebuilding plans and restricted harvest. They also implemented a Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) along the west coast that is closed to most fishing (except for mid-water trawling and salmon fishing). Other means to manage the fisheries included a limited entry to freeze the number of fishing boats that could participate and a buy-back loan program. Makah Fisheries wanted to achieve the same goals as the PFMC, but without as many restrictions. Any new fishery could not impact existing fisheries; for example, trawling for a species that was targeted by long-line fishers could not occur. Makah Fisheries also worked to reduce bycatch by: 1) rotating closures for trawl areas, 2) using small footrope bottom trawl limits, 3) mandating salmon excluders in the whiting fishery, 4) penalty box provisions for catching too many yelloweye or canary rockfish, 5) using real time observer data, reported within 24 hours from returning to port. Additionally, the only directed fishery for lingcod is rod and reel fishery in shallow areas away from rockfish hotspots. Because the Makah Fisheries did not have to go through the same process of PFMC and NEPA, they were able to achieve results of full retention much faster.

**Public Comment** – There were no public comments.

**Superintendent's Report** – Carol acknowledged the passing of an important tribal leader, Bill Frank, Jr., who was known for his eloquence and ability to bring stakeholders together. His work helped catalyze the Boldt Decision and he was an inspiration to tribal members and non-tribal members across the country.

Carol highlighted sanctuary updates from the past two months and referred council members to the Office Report for further information and details:

1. George Galasso and Nancy Wright completed the 2013 Areas to be Avoided (ATBA) compliance report, which now uses satellite imagery. Compliance for the ATBA last year was 97%.
2. OCNMS is gearing up for the field season with *RV Tatoosh* to conduct seafloor habitat mapping and to deploy ten mooring buoys for the oceanographic monitoring program. A marine survey technician was just hired to assist with 2014 field work and work alongside Rick Fletcher prior to his retirement.
3. OCNMS has been working with the State of Washington to identify funding to produce a seafloor atlas, working with Oregon State University. Carol thanked Jennifer Hennessey and Katrina Lassiter for their support in this process.
4. Every year each national marine sanctuary site nominates a Volunteer of the Year (VOY), from which one is selected as the national VOY. OCNMS nominated Karsten Turrey for OCNMS for his efforts in 2013 totaling over 180 hours. Karsten contributed time as a docent for Olympic Coast Discovery Center docent, conducted COASST and intertidal

monitoring surveys, and entered data for the NOAA marine debris monitoring program. Karsten just turned 18 and presented to the AC at the November 2013 meeting during the youth participation program.

5. The education and outreach program is in full swing with OCNMS delivering the North Olympic Watershed program to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Staff have been giving presentations to various local groups to continue promoting and raising awareness of the sanctuary.
6. The annual Washington Coastal Clean-up took place on April 19 with over 1,000 volunteers participating in spite of the rainy weather.
7. George reported that the potential study on social values of marine ecosystem services will be delayed due to Dr. Susan Lovelace's departure from Hollings Marine Laboratory. George is working with Bob Leeworthy, Chief Economist for ONMS, to determine the feasibility of socioeconomic work on non-economic, non-consumptive recreational uses to compliment the state's recreation use study.
8. George announced that anyone interested in outer coast Environmental Sensitivity Indexes (ESIs) should contact him.
9. The proposed expansion of Cordell Bank NMS and Gulf of Farallones NMS in California is receiving public comments through June 30.

The Office Report for May 2014 can be found at:

[http://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/involved/sac/officereport\\_may\\_2014.pdf](http://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/involved/sac/officereport_may_2014.pdf).

### **Member Reports & Future Agenda Topics**

- Brady Scott announced that Katrina Lassiter will be replacing him as the primary WDNR seat on the AC and that an alternate has yet be determined.
- Jennifer Hennessey reported that the Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council (WCMAC) will meet on July 9th in Aberdeen at the Port of Grays Harbor. On behalf of WA Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), she met with George G. and John V. about vessel data. They are working on a contract with National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) on predictive ecological models for a set of papers and marine mammal species.
- Katrina Lassiter announced that they are underway with their contract with WDFW for an analysis of ecologically important areas using a GIS tool cart (Marxan) analysis.
- John Stadler shared that Pacific Fishery Management Council gave the Science Centers and NMFS region a series of questions to address on Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) using existing data available.
- Jan Newton has been working with OCNMS oceanographic monitoring program. She announced that the WA Ocean Acidification Center is hiring three post-docs, one of whom will work on data analysis using sanctuary data and algorithms to predict pH and saturation states based on temperature, salinity and dissolved oxygen. She also thanked Carol for writing letters of support for proposals they submitted to NOAA's marine center innovation competition; she

reported that Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems (NANOOS) was awarded two of the proposals.

- Carolyn Winters was happy to sit in for George Hart. She will get back to OCNMS (George G.) on US Navy ship discharge information.
- Eric Delvin shared that The Nature Conservancy (TNC) received an award from NOAA's Marine Debris Program for \$135,000 to work with Quinault Indian Nation to remove derelict crab pots and to develop a recovery program. They have also started the Washington Coastal Restoration Initiative again, a legislative initiative to obtain restoration to help create jobs on the WA coast with a request for \$15 million.
- Rebecca Post announced that Scott Ferguson has been selected for WDOE's Spills' Prevention Section.
- Rich Osborne mentioned that North Pacific Coast MRC meetings are held monthly on the third Tuesday at 4pm at UW-ONRC in Forks, WA. They will soon launch another year-round of grant proposals.

The next OCNMS Advisory Council meeting will take place on **Friday, July 25** in Port Angeles, WA. Meeting was adjourned.